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TOWERS WITH PLANTS OR SPEARS ON ALTARS: SOME THOUGHTS ON AN URARTIAN MOTIF

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1. Introduction

In his final semester at Munich Stephan Kroll gave a course on the archaeology of Urartu. In one of his lectures he showed a picture of the handle of a pottery vessel with a stamped impression that he had found at Horom (Colour Plate Vb and Fig. 24.01). When I saw this picture, through my ignorance I interpreted this motif as a spear on an altar. Had I known better I would have remembered that in recent years most experts have seen this sign as a 'Tower with Plant' ('Turm mit Pflanze') and not a spear on an altar or pedestal. The nature and interpretation of this motif, which hereafter I will call by the abbreviation **TmP**, is the subject of this paper.

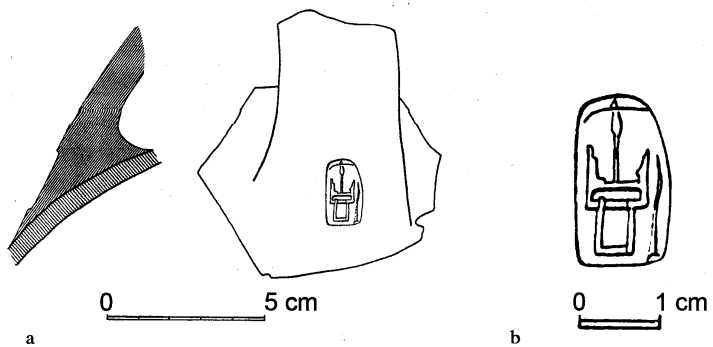


Fig. 24.01. a. Pottery handle found at Horom; b. detail of the TmP mark (drawing courtesy of Stephan Kroll).

2. Examples of TmP ('Turm mit Pflanze')

A similar motif is found on a number of objects from Urartu.[1] The most numerous and well known examples come from a single location and are incised on most of the 97 bronze bowls found in a pithos in Room 25 in Karmir Blur (Teishebai.URU) (Seidl 2004: 58-59). The motif is, however, also found stamped on sherds from several Urartian sites.

TmP stamped on pottery vessels

Many examples of the TmP mark are found stamped on pottery vessels. Often this mark is placed beneath a vertical handle as is the case with the sherd from Horom. The first to be published was found at Toprakkale and was illustrated by Lehmann-Haupt (1931: 587). He described the mark, which was stamped below the

[1] These are conveniently listed and sketched in Movsisyan 1998. I am grateful to Ursula Hellwag for lending me a copy of this book.

handle of a pot (VA 9200) (Calmeyer 1979: 188 n. 39), as 'ein pfeilartiges Abzeichen' (an arrow-like emblem)[2] (Fig. 24.02a). A second mark from Toprakkale now in the Istanbul Archaeology Museums (No. 3883 (1903)) was recently published by Margaret Payne (2005: 146), who described it as a 'spear on tower' (Fig. 24.02b).

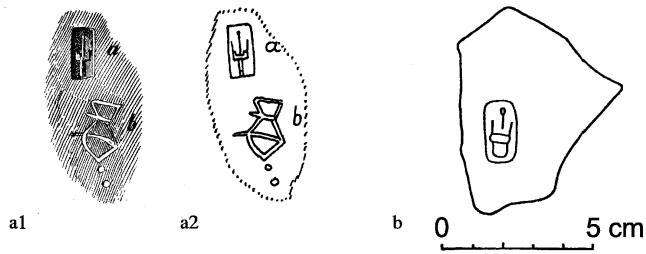


Fig. 24.02. Marks on two sherds from Toprakkale (a1 after Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 587, a2 after Calmeyer 1979: 191 Abb. 9, and b after Payne 2005: 146 C.Aj.13).

Other examples of the TmP mark on pottery have been found at Armavir (Argishtihinili) (20 examples)[3] (Figs. 24.03[4] and 24.04).

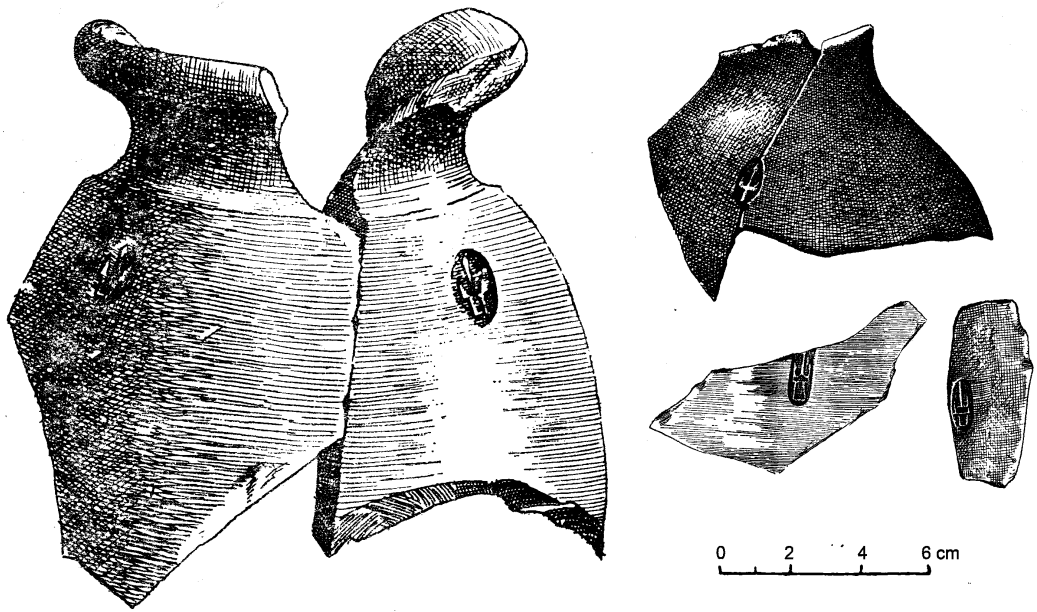


Fig. 24.03. TmP marks on sherds from Armavir (after Martirosyan 1974: Figs. 78-81 on pp. 124, 126, 128 and 129).

[2] Calmeyer (1979: 188) incorrectly stated that Lehmann-Haupt identified it as a 'Turm mit Speerspitze' (tower with spear blade). He also noted that the drawing is inaccurate and that the 'trunk of the tree' is actually shorter.

[3] Movsisyan 1998: pls. VI 41, 46 (Martirosjan 1974: 130), 64, VII 66 (Martirosjan 1974: 128), 75, 82., 83, 89, VIII 113, 116-7, 127-8, 132, IX 164-5, 169, 173, 177, IX 183 (Martirosjan 1974: 124). These sherds are in the State Historical Museum of Armenia.

[4] The drawing of Calmeyer (1979: Abb. 8) omits the second TmP mark on the larger sherd on the left. There is some uncertainty about the scales and I have interpreted the scale on Martirosyan's drawing of the upper right sherd differently to Calmeyer.

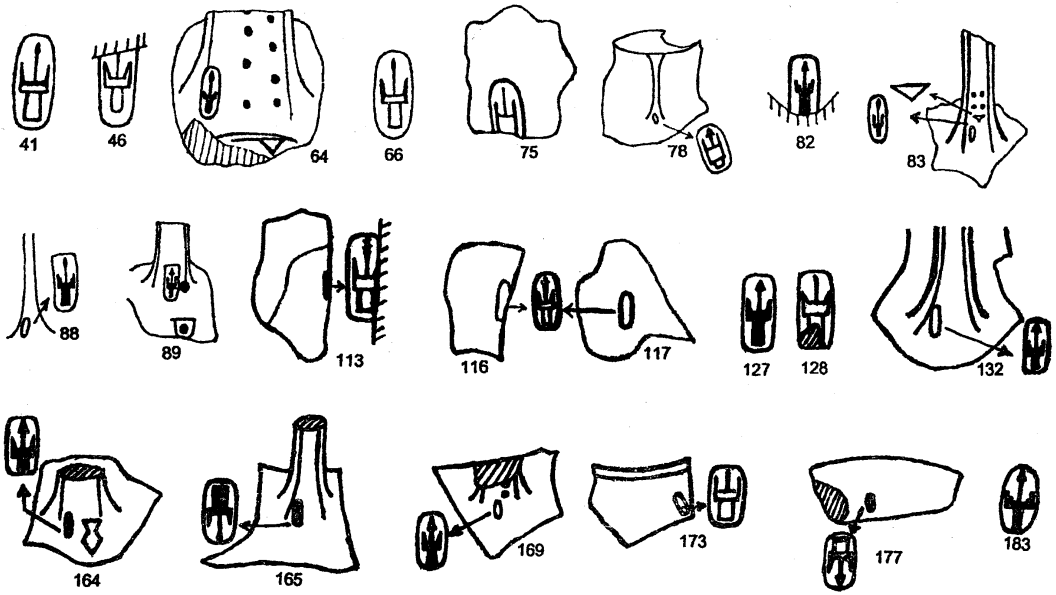


Fig. 24.04. TmP marks on sherds from Armavir (after Movsisyan 1998).

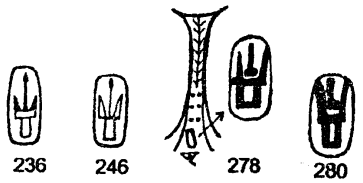


Fig. 24.05. TmP marks on sherds from Karmir Blur (after Movsisyan 1998).

Four examples of the TmP mark have been published from Karmir Blur (Teishebai.URU)[5] (Fig. 24.05). Possible examples may also come from Arinberd[6] and Çavuştepe[7].

There is little evidence for the relative or absolute dating of these potsherds. It is perhaps notable that Karmir Blur is the only one of the four sites founded by Rusa son of Argishti (assuming that Toprakkale was founded earlier by Rusa son of Erimena) in which TmP were stamped on pottery vessels. Much earlier material was found at Karmir Blur but it is not particularly to be expected that pottery vessels would have been brought there from elsewhere. Thus the use of the TmP may be assumed to have extended into the latest phase of the Urartian state. When this mark was first used is also uncertain and the presence of the ruler's names on bowls from Karmir Blur discussed in the next section, on which the TmP also appear, only give a *terminus post quem* dating, as the TmP marks appear to have been added after the vessels were inscribed.

[5] Movsisyan 1998: pl. XXVII 236 (EM 25-227), 246 (EM 25-258), 278 (Piotrovskij 1969: N50 or Piotrovsky 1969: pl. 50, Vajman 1978: 101 3a, 3b), 280 (Piotrovskij 1944: 181). EM = Erebuni Museum.

[6] Seidl 2004: 53 citing Chodžaš et al. 1979: 108 fig. 123.

[7] Dinçol 1974-1977: 110-111; Çavuştepe is called Haykaberd in Movsisyan 1998: pl. XXXI 24.

Movsisyan 1998 provides a useful overview of the various different sorts of marks found in Urartian contexts. These may be stamped, incised or scratched. Those found on pottery vessels are most commonly numerical or quantity measures with pictograms of vessels. The stamped marks include both simple geometric forms, such as crosses, circles, triangles, stars, twigs, tridents, etc. and more elaborate designs. Apart from the TmP the only motif amongst the more elaborate stamped marks that is repeated several times is that of a parasol, which appears in several slightly variant forms. There are examples from Armavir and Karmir Blur, given the connection between ancient Near Eastern royalty and parasols (Roaf 2009) repeated in the seal designs of Rusa son of Argishti found at various sites, it seems plausible that the parasol marks indicate some part of the royal administration. A similar interpretation as indicating some administrative entity is plausible for the TmP marks on pottery vessels.

TmP added to metal bowls

Most of the 97 bronze bowls found hidden in a pithos in Room 25 in Karmir Blur (Teishebai.URU) bear TmP marks (Seidl 2004: 58-59). These bear circular cuneiform inscriptions dating from at least four different reigns (Table 24.01).[8] There are two main types of inscription, an ownership inscription introduced by the signs NÍG.GA or ŠÁ (= NÍG) followed by the king's name[9] and an inscription consisting of the king's name followed by a phrase incorporating the word *urišhi* of which there are four versions formed by inserting the sign É (house) or adding the suffix /usi/.[10] A single bowl (I.10) instead of having a royal name has the ancient name of the site of Bastam (Rusai-URU.TUR). Since Bastam was founded by Rusa son of Argishti the inscription must have been written in his reign or later.

Inscription type		Sarduri [I]	Minua	Argishti [I]	Sarduri [II]	Rusa [I]	(Rusa [II])
1a	NÍG.GA KN	A.1-2					
1b	ŠÁ KN			E.2	F.15-81		
2a1	KN *urišhi*				F.1-14 except those with 2b1 type inscriptions		
2a2	KN *urišhusi*		C.1-6	E.1			
2b1	KN É *urišhi*				at least 4 of F.1-14		
2b2	KN É *urišhusi*					G.1-5	
3	GN						I.10
Totals		2	6	2	81	5	1

KN = king's name, GN = geographical name.

1a NÍG.GA m.d.Sar$_5$-du-ri-e-i (A.1-2)
1b ŠÁ m.Ar-gi-iš-ti-e (E.2); ŠÁ m.d.Sar$_5$-du-ri (F.15-81) with variants adding -i or -e
2a1 m.d.Sar$_5$-du-ri-e ú-ri-iš-hé (F.1-14)
2a2 m.Me-nu-a-i-ni-i ú-ri-iš-hu-si-ni-(i) (C.1-6); m.Ar-gi-iš-ti-e ú-ri-iš-hu-si-ni (E1)
2b1 m.d.Sar$_5$-du-ri-e É ú-ri-iš-hé (F.1-14) with variant m.d.Sar$_5$-du-ri-e É ú-ri-iš-hu
2b2 m.Ru-sa-i-ni-e É ú-ri-iš-hu-si-e (G.1-5) with variants omitting the final -e from one or both of the words
3 m.Rusa-i-ni-i-URU.TUR-gi (I.10)

Table 24.01. Inscriptions on bowls found in a pithos in Room 25 Karmir Blur.
The designations and the identifications of the kings shown in square brackets are those of Seidl 2004, for whom Sarduri I was the son of Lutipri, Argishti I the son of Sarduri, Sarduri II the son of Argishti, Rusa I the son of Sarduri, and Rusa II the son of Argishti.

[8] Seidl (2004: 58-9) dated the two bowls A.1 and A.2 to the reign of Sarduri son of Lutipri because of the form of the script. It is not certain which of the kings named Argishti, Sarduri, and Rusa were intended in the inscriptions.

[9] NÍG.GA or ŠÁ (= NÍG) in Akkadian is normally interpreted as 'property of, belonging to' and it is reasonable to think that it had the same meaning in Urartian inscriptions.

[10] It is not clear whether these variants are significant.

A further group of nine bowls, seven with cuneiform inscriptions and two without, some of which also have TmP marks, was found in Room A. Three bowls have ownership inscriptions (ŠÁ Type 1b) of Sarduri (which of the four kings named Sarduri is not certain) and four É *urišhusi* (Type 2b2) inscriptions from the reign of Rusa (which of the three kings named Rusa is not certain).

The cuneiform inscriptions and the other marks have been recently discussed in detail by Seidl (2004: 45-48). The majority of the inscriptions are ownership inscriptions with ŠÁ (or NÌG.GA) but 26 of the 97 from Room 25 and 3 of the 7 from Room A have inscriptions including some form of the word *urišhi*. *urišhi* appears in variant forms: sometimes it is prefaced by the sign É (house) and sometimes modified into the form *urišhusi*. Seidl (2004: 45) noted that in the list of gifts given to the Haldi Temple in Musasir recorded on the bilingual stele from Kelishin Urartian *urišhi* (pl.) corresponded to Assyrian *tilli* (pl.) and she concluded from the nature of the other items listed on the Kelishin Stele that the meaning of the word *urišhi* lay in the region of military equipment ('militärische Ausrüstung') and commended Benedict's English translation as 'arms'. This interpretation is confirmed by the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary volume T published in 2006 (CAD T: 411 tillu B), where *tillu* is translated as '(military) equipment, weaponry' and *bīt tilli* (literally 'house of weaponry') as 'armory, storehouse for weapons'. Since *urišhi* appears both with and without the sign É (indicating house, building or institution) in the inscriptions on the bowls, the English word arsenal (originally derived from Arabic) might be a suitable translation as it can mean a stock of weapons, a building or part of a building in which weapons were stored, and the establishment responsible for dealing with them.[11] Although the inscribed bowls from Karmir Blur are not, strictly speaking, military equipment, nevertheless they could well have originally belonged to an arsenal.

Seidl no.	Seidl 2004	Movsisyan 1998 pl.	KB no.	Findspot	inscription type	ruler [after Seidl]	TmP	remarks
A.1	Abb. 5		49-123	Room 25	1a	Sarduri [I]	no	
A.2			49-124	Room 25	1a	Sarduri [I]	no	
C.1-4	Abb 6		49-34 to 37	Room 25	2a2	Minua	no	
C.5-6			49-38 to 39	Room 25	2a2	Minua	no	
E.1	Abb. 15a		49-40	Room 25	2a1	Argishti [I]	no	
E.2	Abb. 15b	XXIII 111	49-41	Room 25	1b	Argishti [I]	no	
F.1-14	**Abb. 11**		**49-42 to 55**	**Room 25**	**2a1 or 2b1**	**Sarduri [II]**	**most**	
F.15-78	**Abb. 12**		**49-56 to 119**	**Room 25**	**1b**	**Sarduri [II]**	**most**	
F.79	Abb. 13	XXIII 114	49-120	Room 25	1b	Sarduri [II]	no	
F.80	Abb. 10a	XXIII 112	49-121	Room 25	1b	Sarduri [II]	no	
F.81	**Abb. 10b**	**XXIII 113**	**49-122**	**Room 25**	**1b**	**Sarduri [II]**	**yes**	**with antlers, animal head, and 8 dots**
G.1	**Abb. 14a**	**XXIV 172**	**49-125**	**Room 25**	**2b2**	**Rusa [I]**	**yes**	
G.2	**Abb. 14b**	**XXIV 174**	**49-126**	**Room 25**	**2b2**	**Rusa [I]**	**yes**	
G.3	**Abb. 14c**		**49-127**	**Room 25**	**2b2**	**Rusa [I]**	**yes**	
G.4-5	**Abb. 14b-c**		**49-128 to 129**	**Room 25**	**2b2**	**Rusa [I]**	**yes**	
I.10	Abb. 10c	XXIV 171	49-130	Room 25	3	(Rusa [II])	no	Rusai-URU.TUR founded by Rusa son of Argishti
F.82-83			**51-145 to 146**	**Room A**	**1b**	**Sarduri [II]**	**yes**	
F.84			51-147	Room A	1b	Sarduri [II]	no	
G.6-9			51-148 to 151	Room A	2b2	Rusa [I]	no	

Table 24.02. Inscribed bronze bowls from Rooms 25 and A in Karmir Blur. Those with TmP marks are printed in bold type. For the identifications of the rulers see the caption to Table 24.01.

[11] Salvini (this volume Chapter 08) repeats his earlier proposal (1980: 181-190) that *urišhi* means 'property' and *urišhusi* 'treasure' but includes in brackets the possible meaning 'arsenal' ('Besitz' bzw. 'Schatz' ('Zeughaus')).

Discussion about the TmP has concentrated on the evidence of the inscribed bronze bowls from Karmir Blur. The TmP appears on bowls from the reigns of Sarduri and Rusa but not on those from the reigns of Minua and Argishti nor on that labelled with the name of Rusai-URU.TUR (Bastam) (Table 24.02).

Almost all these bowls (Fig. 24.06) have a lion's head either facing left or right hammered into the metal.[12] Calmeyer and Seidl thought that these marks were probably hammered into the metal at the same time as the inscription was made. In most cases the lion's head is placed upside down, above and just in front of the beginning of the inscription (i.e. inside the inscribed circle). According to Seidl (2004: 49-50) the sign of the lion's head (as well as those of a bull's head and a bird's head) is only found on Urartian metalwork accompanying the king's name written in cuneiform.

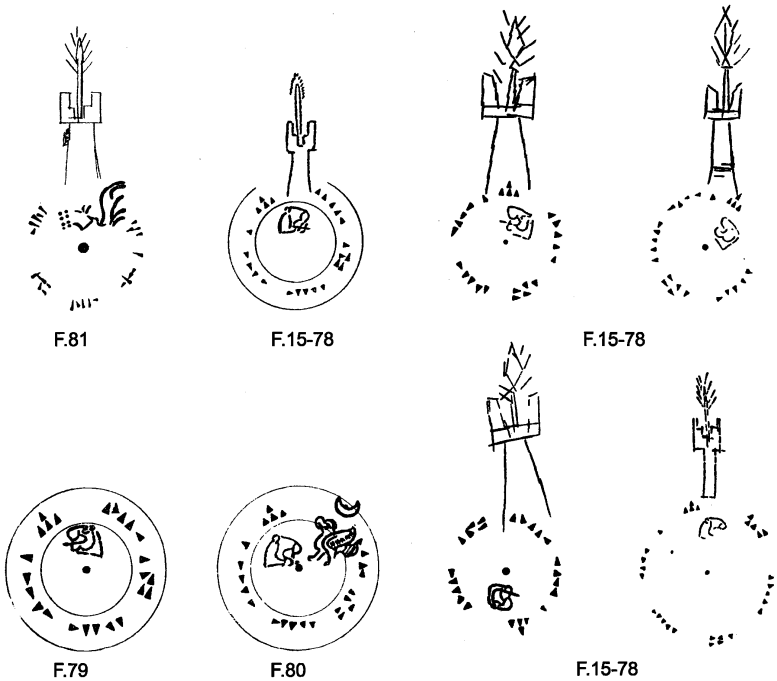


Fig. 24.06. A selection of marks and inscriptions on metal vessels from Karmir Blur showing the relationship between the cuneiform inscriptions read from outside in an anticlockwise direction, the lion's head placed upside down at the beginning of the inscription, and the more crudely executed TmP marks that are less regularly orientated (after Piotrovskij 1952: figs 28-29 on pp. 57-58).

The mark known as TmP normally rises above the lion's head at the beginning and just outside the circular cuneiform inscription recording the king's name (Figs. 24.06-07.[13] Unlike the lion's head this sign appears to have been added at a later date (Seidl 2004: 50; Calmeyer 1979: 190 Abb. 7).[14] Exactly how many of the 81 bowls from Room 25 with inscriptions of Sarduri had TmP marks is uncertain as not all of them have been published. The TmP mark is present on all five of the bowls with inscriptions of Rusa (G.1-5) from Room 25

[12] F81 is an exception.

[13] Movsisyan 1998: pl. XXIII 111- XXV 176 illustrates the marks on 66 of the bowls from Karmir Blur. Five of these do not have the TmP (pl. XXIII 111, 112, 114, 115, pl. XXV 171) the remaining 61 do. Since neither Piotrovskij (1952, 1955) nor Movsisyan give the original KB numbers, it is difficult to identify which bowls are illustrated: some identifications are given in Table 24.02.

[14] Bernbeck (2003-2004b: 56 and n. 8), although citing Salvini's alternative interpretation (1995a: 203-206), seems to follow Merhav (Merhav 1991a: 202) in thinking that the hieroglyphs indicate the royal atelier in which the bowl was made. He is not specific as to whether he supposes that the lion's head or the TmP or both signified the workshop.

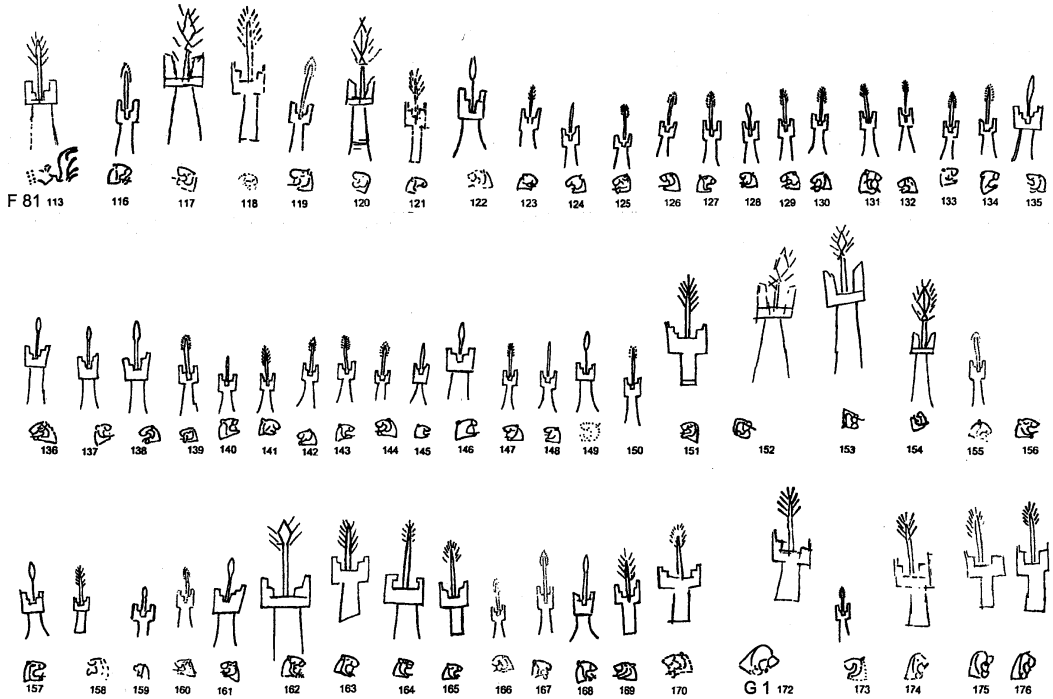


Fig. 24.07. TmP marks on Karmir Blur bowls (after Movsisyan 1998: pls. XXIII-XXV).

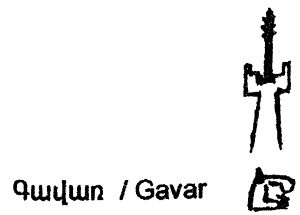


Fig. 24.08. TmP mark on an object from Gavar (after Movsisyan 1998: pl. XIII.2).

as well as on two of the three bowls with inscriptions of Sarduri found in Room A (F.82-83). The other bowls from Room A do not have the TmP added to them (Table 24.02).

Movsisyan (1998: pl. XIII Gavar 2) illustrates a TmP (Fig. 24.08) in a similar style to those from Karmir Blur also associated with a lion's head) that allegedly came from Gavar. Gavar, also known as Kyavar and Nor Bayazet and previously known as Kamo, lies on the west side of Lake Sevan. Movsisyan 1998: 96 cites an Armenian language publication (Gayseryan 1984: 101-102), which Zimansky (1998: 119) described as follows: 'in Armenian with no summary in another language. Bronze articles from Kamo with Urartian inscriptions. The articles in question, a horse blinker and a rather amorphous sheet of bronze are shown in a low quality photograph.'[15] Possibly the amorphous sheet of bronze was a bowl with the TmP mark on it. Presumably there was a royal inscription to go with the lion's head.

[15] I have not been able to consult this publication and find out any further details.

Since the TmP are found with both the ŠÁ and *urišhi* inscriptions and are secondary there need not have been – and there probably was not – a connection between *urišhi* and the TmP. Seidl suggested that the bowls might have been originally intended for some other purpose connected with the *urišhi* but later were added to a temple inventory and it was their sacred qualities that led them to be hidden in the pithos in Room 25. She suggested that the intrinsic value of the metal of the bowls was too small for them to have been hoarded. The TmP she interpreted as a sign that they belonged to the temple.

3. *Interpretations*

So far we have looked at the contexts of the TmP marks. A glance at the illustrations shows that they all share two main features: namely a crenellated stand on which a vertical object rises, but there is considerable variety in the details of the representations.

The lower part of the TmP, the 'tower', on the bronze bowls is generally battered and tall, while that on the pottery vessels has parallel sides and is shorter. The vertical object, the 'plant', is sometimes shown pointed and sometimes with an expanded end like a leaf or spear blade. It is sometimes marked by diagonal lines emanating from its upper part. Movsisyan (1998: Table II on p.45) distinguished the rayed version from the plain version and we may reasonably ask whether we are in fact dealing with a single motif or with two or more motifs.

In my opinion there is not enough evidence to sustain a subdivision into meaningful subtypes. The contexts of all the various varieties of the TmP motif are similar and, although the stamped marks are almost exclusively without 'twigs' or 'rays', there is one example from Armavir which appears to be of the rayed variety. Both rayed and unrayed TmP are present in the hoard of bronze bowls, which suggests that the varieties of TmP marks are to be similarly interpreted.[16]

Since the TmP takes various forms it is not immediately clear what exactly is represented on top of the 'tower' and a variety of suggestions have been made. Lehmann-Haupt compared the example stamped on the handle of a pot found in Toprakkale (VA 9200) to an arrow, and others identified it as a spear or spearhead. More recently it has frequently been described as either a plant or tree or a variety of sacred artificial tree. I will first consider the lower part of the TmP sign and then discuss what the upper part might represent. In the identification of the objects represented, some scholars have first arrived at an interpretation of the meaning of the sign and used this to identify the objects depicted in the TmP. Thus when it was assumed that the TmP marked the property of the god Haldi and that a spear was the symbolic weapon of Haldi, it was natural to identify the vertical object as a spear. When it was assumed that the TmP marked the property of the fortress or arsenal it was natural to assume that the lower part of the TmP represented a fortified building and the upper part a weapon. Such a procedure is methodically flawed and, although I realise there is no hope of a definite answer, I will here attempt to identify the parts of the TmP solely on the evidence of their appearance. I will start with the lower part.

Tower or pedestal

A major difficulty in the identification is that there is no indication of the scale of the objects depicted. The heights of the two parts of the TmP are roughly equal and so one might hope that the objects they represent were of a similar height in reality. Thus if as Salvini (1995a: 205) suggested a growing tree is shown this could be as much as 20 metres high in which the 'tower' would be a dominant object. On the other hand, if a sacred tree (c. 1 to 2 m high judging from the size of sacred trees compared to the anthropomorphic beings

[16] The TmP is formally similar to the trident, which could be considered a schematic version of the TmP. The trident has a similar importance to the TmP in Urartian royal ideology as is shown by its frequent appearance on seals and pottery. Its significance is also unclear. Even if the trident and the TmP share a related meaning, in the investigation of this meaning they should be considered separately. For a cultic interpretation of a trident found at Hasanlu see Kroll 2009.

depicted beside them) or a normally sized spear (c. 1½ to 2 m long) is depicted, a corresponding 'tower' of the same height would not be particularly impressive. If it were only a spear blade, the 'tower' would be the size of stool. If the spear were exceptionally long as for example the spears depicted in front of the Temple of Haldi on the Musasir relief (Fig. 24.12) or the spears on the Treasury relief at Persepolis, the 'tower' would be a reasonable height for a tower. Perhaps it is best to assume that the relative sizes of the 'tower' and the 'plant' do not mirror their actual relative sizes.

The relative height of the crenellations to the height of the tower is between 1:1 and 1:2. If the crenellations are real architectural features then one would expect them to be large enough to protect a defender. Again it is probably more sensible to assume that the relative sizes of the crenellations and the shaft of the 'tower' are not realistic.

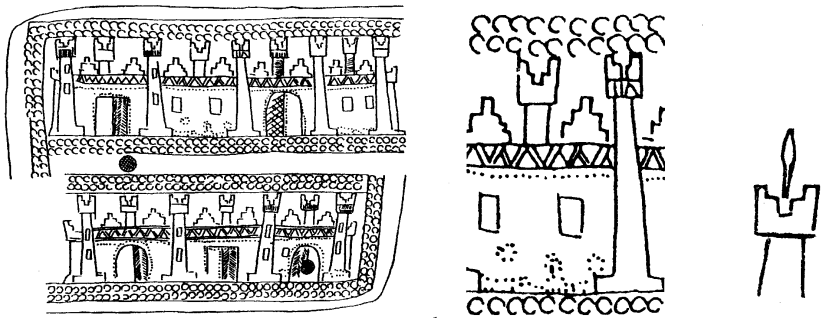


Fig. 24.09. Towers on an Urartian fortress on a bronze belt (a) with an enlarged detail (b) compared with a TmP mark on a bowl from Karmir Blur (after Seidl 2004: Abb. 104 sm-36 and Movsisiyan 1998: pl. XXIV.146).

The form of the 'tower' with stepped triangular corner crenellations overlapping the wall below is similar to the interval towers of fortresses depicted on Urartian bronzes (Fig. 24.09) (e.g. Seidl 2004: Abb. 104). These are generally taller in proportions to the TmP but often that part that rises above the curtain wall has similar proportions: occasionally similar towers appear above the curtain wall and these too are closely comparable to the TmP (e.g. Seidl 2004: Abb. 104 sm-9, sm-12, sm-36). None of these architectural representations of towers, however, have any object rising from them.

Furthermore the TmP appear to be isolated structures not clearly attached to other walls. Unlike the fortresses depicted in Urartian or Assyrian art including the town models and depictions of 'towns' shown in Assyrian and Achaemenid art in metalwork and on textiles (Calmeyer 1992) they consist of a single crenellated shaft and have no doorways.

Crenellations are a well-known motif in the art of the Near East which although referencing and indeed derived from military fortifications found a wide application in other contexts. These may be architectonic as for example the column supports from Kefkalesi (Fig. 24.23) or in other media. Urartian metal plaques are often furnished with a row of crenellations. Wall paintings and small finds may depict crenellations and it would be rash therefore to conclude that the presence of crenellations shows that the 'tower' of the TmP is a building.

There are some interesting common features of Urartian and Achaemenid Persian architecture and iconography (Seidl 1994a): some of these David Stronach (this volume Chapter 21) discusses in his paper. Some of them appear to be chiefly limited to these two cultures. One might mention the rectangular standards, oversize spears, and stepped stone wall niches. It would therefore not be unreasonable to think that a motif such as a pedestal or altar equipped with crenellations found in Achaemenid Iran might be derived from an Urartian precursor (Fig. 24.10). On a seal impression from Persepolis (PT4 704 and 847 Seal no. 23 Schmidt 1957: pls. 2 and 7) and on seals in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts

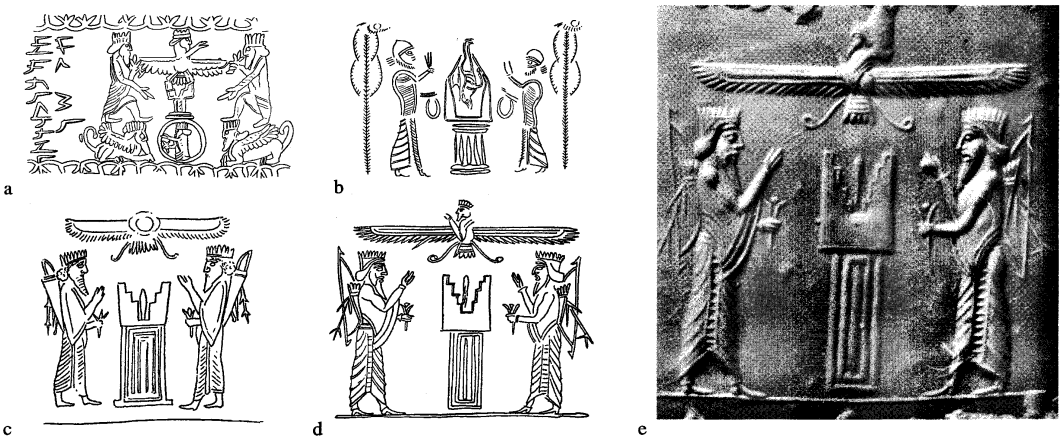


Fig. 24.10. Drawings of Achaemenid cylinder seal impressions with crenellated altars or pedestals.
a. Ankara Museum, b. Ashmolean Museum Ash.1892.1416, c. Boston Museum of Fine Arts,
d. Bibliothèque Nationale 401, e. detail of d. (after Moorey 1979: figs. 2A, 3B, 2B, 2C. Collon 1987: no. 754).

(Fig. 24.10c-e) a crenellated tower-shaped object is flanked by two persons wearing the Persian-Elamite robe. Between the two stepped corner merlons is an object which looks similar to but smaller than the object on the Horom impression. In an Achaemenid Persian context one might expect to see fire burning. Somewhat similar tower-like altars are seen on other seal impressions from Persepolis (e.g. PT6 100 Seal no, 57 Schmidt 1957: pl. 13) and on other Achaemenid seals (Fig. 24.10a-b). Calmeyer (1979: 189 and n. 40) mentioned a suggestion by David Stronach that instead of a tower in some TmP on the bronze bowls from Karmir Blur a crenellated fire altar might have been depicted.[17]

In the Late Assyrian period incense burners with corner crenellations comparable to the lower part of the TmP have been found at Nimrud and Nineveh (Fig. 24.11c, Searight, Reade & Finkel 2008: nos. 583-585). Altars with crenellations are also depicted on Assyrian reliefs from Khorsabad and Nineveh (Fig. 24.11a-b). In these examples the structures have a central stepped merlon as well as the two corner ones.

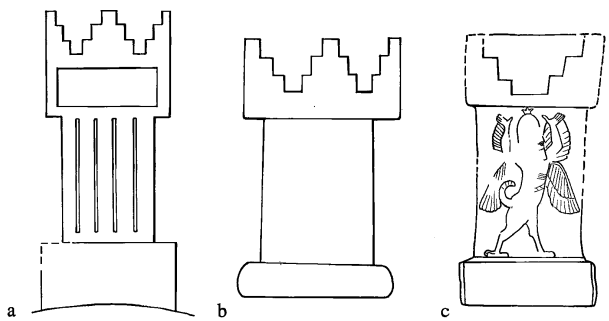


Fig. 24.11. Crenellated stands on Assyrian reliefs a. from Khorsabad (Room 7.13) and b. from Nineveh (North Palace H8?), and c. an incense burner from Nineveh (drawn by Cornelie Wolff after a. Albenda 1986: pl. 90, b. Barnett 1976: pl. XXIII, and c. Searight, Reade and Finkel 2008: pl. 57 no. 585).

[17] „Einzelne Ritzbilder aus Karmir Blur könnte man auch als Feueraltäre mit Zinnenbekrönung deuten." He observed, however, that Stronach had not included this hypothesis in his classification of fire altars and that the 'plant' did not look like fire. Schmidt (1957: 27), however, described the object on the altar on the impressions PT4 704 and 847 as 'one vertical line, symbolising fire'. The identification the TmP with a fire altar had already been suggested by Khlopin (1977).

In my opinion it is not possible to decide with certainty whether the 'tower' of the TmP is intended to be a tower or some smaller free standing structure such as a pedestal or altar. Neither possibility can or should be eliminated in our current state of knowledge.

Weapon or tree

Similar uncertainty dogs the identification of the object on top of the 'tower'. The most detailed study is that of Calmeyer (1979), who considered the various possibilities. In its simplest form (Movsisyan 1998: VII 75, VIII 128; pl. XXIV 124, 145, 148) it is a simple line or pointed stick. In most cases, however, the upper end of the object has a triangular, leaf-shaped, or, occasionally, rhomboid swelling, which makes the object look more like a weapon with a spear blade or arrowhead than a plant. On the TmP on the bronze bowls, however, these three basic types are in the majority of cases supplemented by lines or dots that encircle or emerge from the upper part of the object. A possibly related additional marking is shown on one stamp from Armavir (Movsisyan 1998: pl. VIII 113). 43 of the 62 TmP on bronze bowls from Karmir Blur illustrated by Movsisyan have such additional markings. In some cases the addition of lines converts the object into a much more plant-like form. In other cases the halo of dots which does not join the main stem serves to draw attention to the pointed end of the object without greatly changing the character of the object.

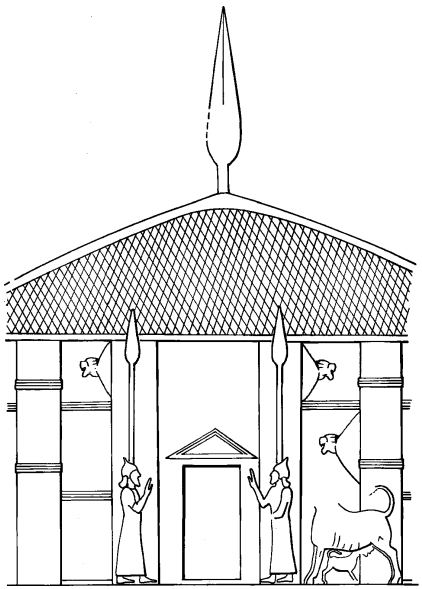


Fig. 24.12. A reconstructed sketch of the relief at Khorsabad showing the oversized spears and a spear-blade shaped finial on the central part of the Haldi Temple at Musasir (drawn by Cornelie Wolff).

While the plant-like nature of some of these TmP is undoubted the precise nature of the plant is varied. In some cases they appear like an ear of grain or a branch with twigs in others the general outline is that of a plant. The variety of forms reminds one of the multitude of forms in which the so-called 'sacred tree' is depicted in Urartu.[18] These include complicated networks of stem, tendrils, buds and fruit based on Assyrian sacred trees, simple herringbone forms, candelabra-like arrangements of branches with leaf or spearhead

[18] Hančar 1966 proposed a twofold classification of Urartian sacred trees; Calmeyer 1979 proposed a fourfold classification noting that there were also additional intermediate and variant types. For a study of Urartian sacred trees see Belli 1980.

shaped projections, and in the extreme case single stemmed trees with a leaf-shaped profile. This simplified form, which is shown also in the objects held by the genies and at the ends of the branches in more complicated sacred tree forms, has the outline of a lanceolate spearhead and as such is difficult to distinguish from a spear head. Thus on the Musasir relief (Fig. 24.12) the two long spears either side of the entrance are undoubtedly spears but the roof finial or acroterion which has a shorter shaft but otherwise has the same outline is sometimes taken to be a variety of sacred tree rather than derived from the form of a spear (Calmeyer 1979: 189).[19]

Looked at objectively, avoiding assumptions based on other considerations about what is likely to have been depicted, the majority of the representations of TmP – including almost all those stamped on pottery vessels – are more readily interpreted as spears or arrows than as plants or trees.

The meaning of the TmP

Although there is uncertainty about the identification of the individual elements of the TmP and of the motif as a whole, several scholars have proposed possible interpretations of the motif. For the most part these are not based on any solid evidence, but nevertheless often command a wide acceptance and are not unreasonable proposals.

Vajman (1978) started his investigation of the Urartian hieroglyphs by considering three marks on a potsherd from Karmir Blur consisting of 7 dots, a drawing of a pot, and a drawing of a twig or ear of corn. The dots are generally accepted as a numerical sign, the pot sign is often found in combination with numbers and a reasonable suggestion would be that the pot sign is an indication of a capacity measure. Since a common phrase in foundation inscriptions is 'x *kapi ištini*' 'x *kapi* are contained here', where *kapi* is a unit of measurement, he suggested that the ear of corn stood for the word *ištini* and meant 'in this, here'. The similarity of this twig mark with some of the objects on the 'tower' in the TmP on the bronze bowls led him to suggest a similar interpretation. He assumed an equivalence of the twig with the other spear-blade or leaf-like objects. Vajman thought that the 'tower' corresponded to the phrase É.GAL 'palace, fortress' he proposed that the ligature of the two signs 'twig' and 'tower' meant 'for the fortress'.

While the association of the 'tower' with a building and the identification of a site as the 'fortress'[20] are not unreasonable, the rest of the interpretation seems purely conjectural. The three mark combination of number, pot, and twig is only attested on this potsherd from Karmir Blur and rather than the twig meaning 'in this, here', it would be more natural to think that it either indicated a particular type of commodity or the institution to which the vessel and its contents belonged.

Vajman's hypothesis was repeated by Salvini (1995a: 203-206) in his summary of what is known about Urartian hieroglyphs. Without comment he described the TmP as the 'sign of a tower on which a tree grows' ('Zeichen des Turmes, auf dem ein Baum wächst', Salvini 1995a: 205) and took the sign to be a *pars pro toto* writing for 'Festung' citadel.

Since the ancient name of Karmir Blur, Teishebai.URU, showed a connection with the storm god Teisheba whose emblem was presumably a thunderbolt, and, since the object on the 'tower' is not a thunderbolt, it is likely that, if the TmP did in fact indicate a site, it did not refer exclusively to Karmir Blur. Its presence on objects from sites other than Karmir Blur also suggests that it referred not to a specific site but an entity, be it an entire settlement, a part of it, a building, an institution or an individual, which was present in several Urartian royal centres.

A year after Vajman's analysis appeared, Calmeyer (1979) published the most detailed discussion of this motif to date. Starting from two unusually large iron spearheads found at Bastam he investigated whether there was any reason to assign to them a religious rather than a purely military purpose and whether they might be connected with the god Haldi.[21]

[19] There is no reason why this acroterion must be a sign in the Saussurean sense. Like much architectural decoration it could have form without a particular meaning.

[20] One might think of the use of the word *magdalu* as a name for Dur-Katlimmu or *birtu* for Persepolis.

[21] In this article he was also reacting against the assertions of Riemschneider 1963 who had stated as if it were an accepted proven fact that Haldi's symbol was a spear but had given no supporting evidence.

His conclusion was that in the state of knowledge at that time there was no convincing evidence for such a connection. Two words in Urartian texts, *urišhi* and *šuri*, refer to objects associated with Haldi. We have already encountered the *urišhi* on the bronze bowls from Karmir Blur.[22] Although the precise meanings of these words were not known for certain, scholarly opinion in Germany[23] at that time favoured the interpretation of *šuri* as a chariot and so he concluded that there was no good reason to identify either of these words with a spear.

No anthropomorphic image of the god Haldi had at that time been identified with certainty (Eichler 1984). Spear-like objects in Urartian art such as the acroterion on the roof of the Temple of Haldi in Musasir[24] were in Calmeyer's opinion more plausibly interpreted as leaf-shaped forms of a sacred tree than as weapons.

Finally he considered the TmP motif under the heading 'Trees on Buildings' (Bäume auf Gebäuden). Because of the 'feathering' of the top of object on the 'tower' he concluded that these were not weapons and because of the height of this feathering above the base that they could not represent flames of fire[25] and concluded that the objects on the 'towers' were also one of the many forms of sacred trees current in Urartu (Calmeyer 1979: 186 n. 23).

Despite his rejection of the spear theory Calmeyer still thought that the TmP should be associated with the god Haldi and following earlier suggestions by Hančar (1961 and 1966) concluded that the TmP was a mark identifying the use of the vessels as libation vessels for the god Haldi. As he wrote (Calmeyer 1979: 192) „es ist unmöglich, hier nicht an Libationen zu denken; Handlungen des Königs oder in seinem Auftrag, gerichtet an den Staatsgott Haldi – wenn anders wir der Verbindung Halditempel/Baum trauen dürfen." He also suggested that to begin with there were only the cuneiform inscriptions and lion's heads on the bronze bowls from Karmir Blur and the TmP were added when the vessels that had originally belonged to a different institution were re-assigned for the service of the god Haldi.

Seidl (2004) sometimes called the mark 'Turm mit Baum' and sometimes 'Turm mit Pflanze'.[26] She did not mention that the tree or plant could be interpreted as a form of the sacred tree but she accepted Calmeyer's suggestion that the TmP mark indicated that the ceramic and bronze vessels were for libations for Haldi and suggested that it was the sacred nature of the bronze vessels found in Room 25 that led to them being hoarded in a pithos.

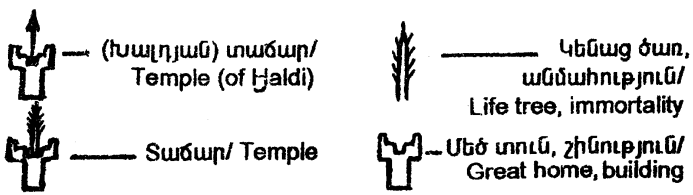


Fig. 24.13. Movsisyan's interpretation of the marks as hieroglyphs (after Movsisyan 1998: 45 Table II).

Movsisyan (1998) took the TmP to be a sign in the Urartian hieroglyphic script. i.e. not just an identification mark. He distinguished two varieties of TmP 'tower with spear/arrow' and 'tower with plant/tree'. He thought that the signs of a lion's head and of a TmP supplemented but did not translate the accompanying

[22] Calmeyer stated that *urišhi* and *šuri* could not be the same object as according to his understanding of the Urartian texts *urišhi* always appeared in the plural.

[23] Other scholars, particularly in the Soviet Union, thought that *šuri* might have been a weapon (e.g. Melikišvili 1960: 407).

[24] Calmeyer noted that the acroterion had a central rib unlike the blades of the large spears depicted on either side of the entrance.

[25] The relevance of Marquart's suggestion that the descriptions in Herodotus and Ctesias regarding the place where the true Bardiya was murdered might refer to a tower temple and the reconstruction by Lessing of a cypress tree on this tower are not clear to me.

[26] Seidl did not discuss or give her reasons for using these terms. Her insertion of inverted commas might indicate. that the nomenclature was conventional. Furthermore her use of the label 'Turm mit Pflanze' as opposed to 'Pflanze auf einem Turm' or the more balanced alternatives 'Turm und Pflanze' and 'Pflanze und Turm' clearly prioritises the 'Turm' rather than the 'Pflanze'. Calmeyer on the other hand by describing the motif as 'Bäume auf Gebäuden' stressed the upper rather than the lower part of the motif.

cuneiform inscriptions.[27] 'The cuneiform legend marks the owner of the vessel, and the hieroglyphic one – the person to [whom the object was to] be donated (the god Haldi, the house/temple of Haldi, etc.)' (1998: 80). In his Table II (Fig. 24.13) he proposed that lion's head and the spear could represent Haldi, the 'plant' 'Life tree, immortality', the 'tower' alone 'Great home, building', while the 'tower with spear' stood for 'Temple (of Haldi)' and the 'tower with plant' for 'Temple'.[28] Thus although there has been no uniform view or complete consensus the tendency seems to be that the TmP represents a plant on a tower and that it is connected with the temple of Haldi not because of its connection with a putative spear of Haldi but because it represents a building and a sacred tree.

4. New evidence

Since Calmeyer and Movsisyan published their conclusions, two new pieces of evidence have for the first time given definite evidence for the iconography and attributes of the god Haldi.

The first is the discovery of an inscription at Ayanis which names the *šuri* of Haldi (Çilingiroğlu & Salvini 1999; Çilingiroğlu & Salvini (eds.) 2001: 173 fig. 5, 275; Seidl 2004: 42 (I28), 91-92). This was found with an oversize spear-head (Fig. 24.14)[29] and has been accepted as proof that the *šuri* of Haldi was indeed a weapon and specifically a spear.

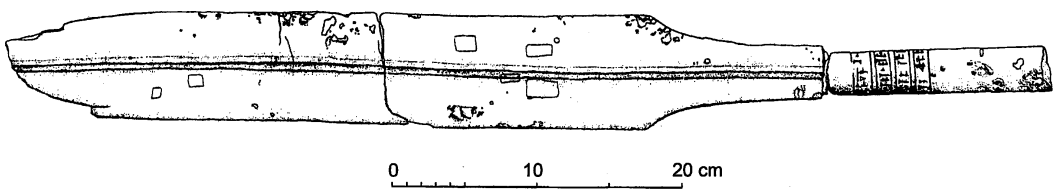


Fig. 24.14. Spear blade and inscribed tube from Ayanis (after Seidl 2004).

The second is the discovery of a remarkable shield in a room near the Haldi Temple in Anzaf. On this shield, a row of Urartian gods and a battle scene, in which human enemies were defeated, were depicted (Fig. 24.15). Although only fragmentary, a cuneiform inscription shows that it was dedicated to Haldi by Ishpuini and Minua. A row of twelve gods could be reconstructed most of them standing on an animal: each divinity was equipped with distinctive weapons.

Most of the deities cannot be identified with certainty, but the second and third are clearly the storm god Teisheba standing on a lion and the sun god Shiuini standing on a bull: they can be identified because of the thunderbolts and winged sun disc. In front of Teisheba is a running figure holding a spear[30] in his right hand and a bow in his left (Fig. 24.16). He has a sword at his waist. He wears a plain conical helmet unlike the other gods whose helmets have horns. There is, however, a break that runs through the helmet and the details are not as clear on the photographs as they are shown in the drawings. The figure is depicted against a circle of radiating flames corresponding to the Assyrian divine *melammu*. Flames were also recorded on the spear and on the legs of the figure. Because of his position in front of Teisheba and Shiuini this figure has been identified with the head of the Urartian pantheon Haldi.

[27] Movsisyan appears to have assumed that the cuneiform inscriptions, the lion's heads, and the TmP marks were placed on the vessels at the same time.

[28] The English summary does not give any justification for these identifications. I cannot tell if the Armenian text gives reasons.

[29] That the *šuri* referred to on the cylinder can be identified with the spear blade found with it has not been doubted. The publication suggests that the object might be a "sword-spear": this seems unnecessarily cautious to me.

[30] The weapon looks like a throwing spear because of the way it is held and because a similar spear appears to have been thrown at the enemies in the battle scene. On the other hand the presence of a bow and the absence of a quiver with arrows might suggest that it was an oversized arrow.

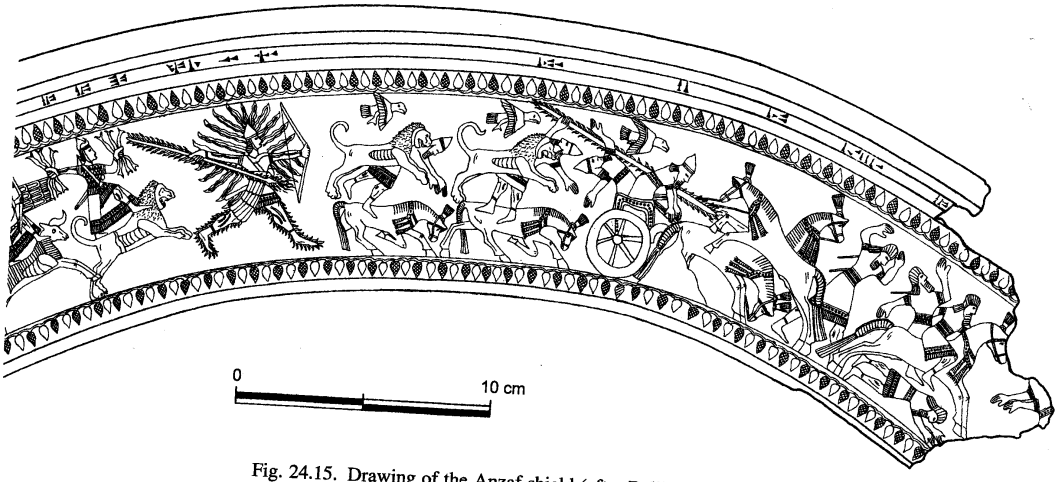


Fig. 24.15. Drawing of the Anzaf shield (after Belli 1999a: fig. 17).

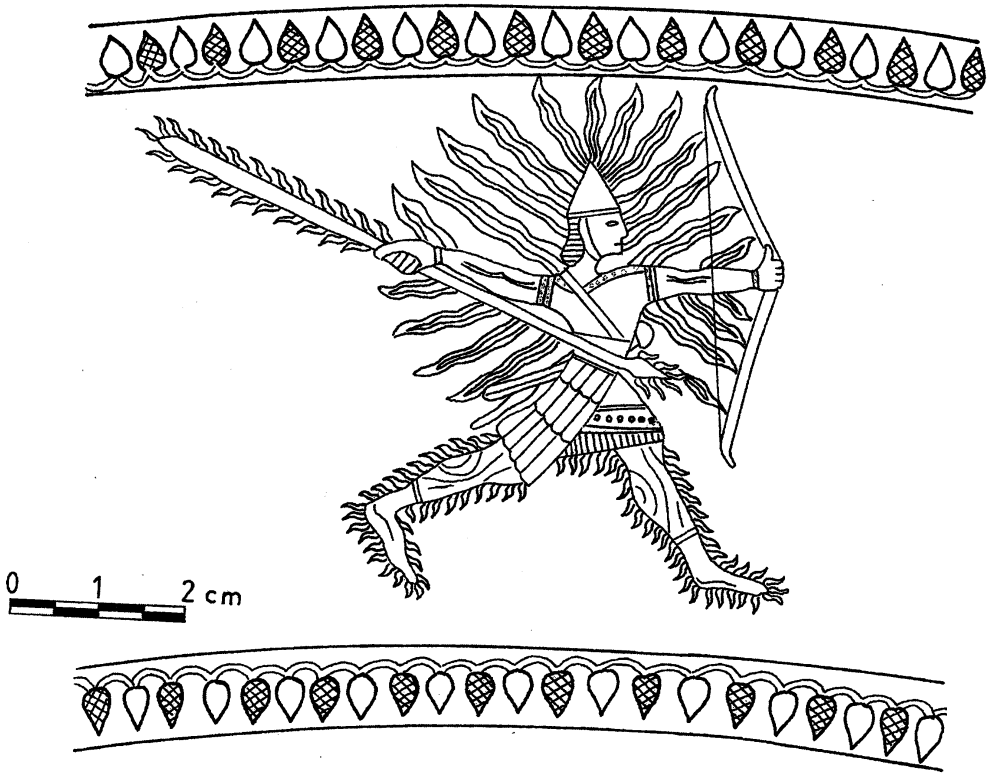


Fig. 24.16. A drawing of Haldi on the Anzaf shield (after Belli 1999a: fig. 18).

In front of the figure identified as Haldi is a scene called by Belli the battle scene. It consists of two lions (or perhaps the same lion shown twice) accompanied by three eagles (or one eagle shown three times) attacking various soldiers who from their military equipment appear to be Assyrians.[31] In addition a large spear has been thrown into the enemy ranks causing considerable damage (Fig. 24.17). This spear, like that held by Haldi, is depicted with flames along its length, thus suggesting that it had been thrown by Haldi.[32]

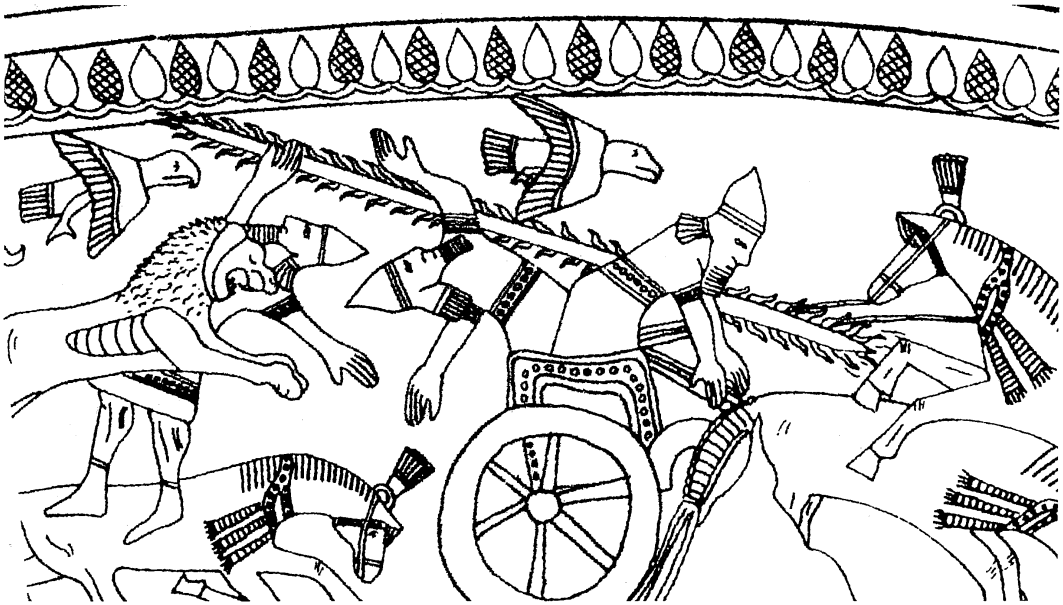


Fig. 24.17. Detail of the battle scene on the Anzaf shield (after Belli 1999a: fig. 31).

These two discoveries have given evidence of an association of the god Haldi with spears which was lacking when Peter Calmeyer investigated this question. There is therefore now evidence for thinking that a spear and in particular a flaming spear was an attribute of Haldi and thus could be an emblem of Haldi and even perhaps a symbol for Haldi.[33] It is therefore worth reconsidering the question of whether the TmP could in fact show a spear rather than a plant.

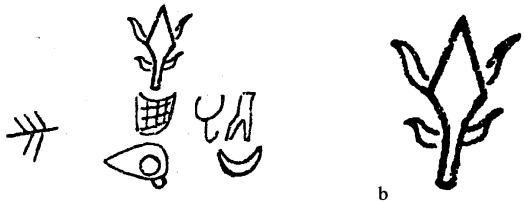
Some of the images do indeed look like spears or spearheads: all the TmP on pottery vessels could be so described. The difficulty arises with the marks on the bronze bowls which have additional lines or dots near the point of the 'spear'. Calmeyer thought that they might indicate fire but dismissed this hypothesis because they did not start immediately above the top of the 'tower'/'altar'. We could, however, see these markings as an indication of flames emanating from the top of the spear. The drawings show a certain variety but the idea is plausible. On one of the bowls without a cuneiform inscription from Room A in the Karmir Blur citadel are a series of marks one of which looks like a spear blade with flames coming out of it (Fig. 24.18).[34]

[31] One might assume that the attacking lions are the animals on whose back Haldi would normally have stood. No human victors are shown and the victory is therefore depicted as a purely divine victory not mediated through the king of Urartu and his army. (For an alternative view see the previous note.) Oddly it is a reverse hunt in which the lions, which are normally the prey, turn on their hunters reversing the tables like the hare in Struwwelpeter.

[32] The two spears are similar but not identical: that held by Haldi has a definite spear blade and is noticeably shorter. The spear in the battle scene comes to a simple point and is longer.

[33] Payne (2005: 330 n. 8) seems to be of the same opinion as she identifies the upper part of the motif that she calls 'Spear on Tower' as 'the luminous spear of Haldi'.

[34] This mark, like the spear/arrow, Movsisyan (1998: Table II p. 45) thought represented the god Haldi.



a b

Fig. 24.18. a. Marks on an uninscribed bowl from Room A in Karmir Blur; b. detail of the largest mark (after Movsisyan 1998: pl. XXVIII).

It could then be proposed that the upper part of the TmP represented a spear and not just any spear but specifically the *šuri,* the flaming spear of Haldi, the chief god of the Urartians.

5. *Problems*

The new evidence from Ayanis and Anzaf, which seems to prove that the *šuri* of Haldi was a flaming spear, is not, however, without uncertainties and could be interpreted differently.

The inscription mentioning the *šuri* of Haldi is on a tube of metal which does not directly join the spear blade. There is therefore a slight possibility that the tube might have belonged to some other object, perhaps a different sort of weapon, and that the word *šuri* referred to this instead. Alternatively the word *šuri* might be a general word for weapon, in this case a spear but in other cases perhaps some other type of weapon.

The identification of the running figure on the Anzaf shield with Haldi is not certain but no alternative suggestion is more probable.[35] The details of the image too are not certain. The surface of the bronze is corroded and difficult to interpret. The three drawings of the god Haldi in the Anzaf publication (Figs. 24.16, 24.19-20) differ in minor details. Thus in figure 18 on p. 38 (here Fig. 24.16) tongues of flame appear on the spear behind Haldi's right hand and more are found on the spear blade, but there are none shown between the god's hand and the spear blade. On the cover illustration (here Fig. 24.19) in addition to the tongues of flame behind the god's hand and those on the spear blade there are some between his hand and the spear blade: furthermore the arrangement of the tongues of flame around the spear blade is different. On figure 17 (here Fig. 24.20) flames are shown along the whole length of the spear from butt to tip.

In her book *Bronzekunst Urartus* Ursula Seidl discussed and illustrated part of the Anzaf shield. In the caption to her revised illustration of the god Haldi (Fig. 24.21) she modestly described her drawing as being based on Belli 1999a: fig. 17, 'mit leichter Modifikation'. Comparing her drawing with those published in Belli 1999a we see that her slight modification has removed all the small tongues of flame encircling Haldi's legs[36] and the flames on the spear except for those at the butt end of the spear.

Examination of the published photographs partly confirms Seidl's modifications. Indeed even the presence of flames at the butt end of the spear seems also to be doubtful. The drawing of Haldi included in this volume Chapter 28 by Findling and Muhle (Fig. 28.02a) acknowledges this and shows no flames at all on the spear.

The surface of the bronze is, however, corroded and uneven. The X-ray photographs clearly show the rays of the circular *melammu* but they show no trace of flames and if there were flames on the spear they were not created by the metalworker in the same way as the rays of the *melammu.* Incised surface decoration such

[35] Zimansky (this volume Chapter 07: n. 10) doubts the identity of this figure with the god Haldi because he has a simple soldier's helmet unmarked by divine horns and because he does not stand on the back of an animal as do all the other deities. Instead he sees the Urartian king acting with the power and weapons of Haldi. If this is correct, the spear and bow would still be those of Haldi.

[36] The X-ray photographs (Belli 1999a: pls. 46 and 48) suggest that the flames shown emanating from below the god's skirt in Belli's drawings are in fact the ends of the rayed circle behind the god.

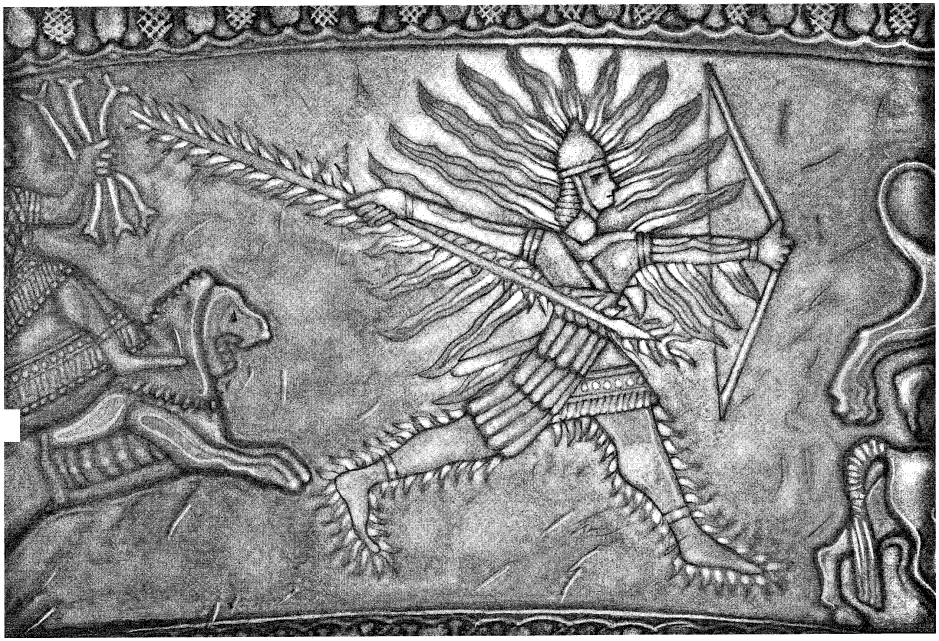


Fig. 24.19. Drawing of Haldi on the Anzaf shield (original in colour, after Belli 1999a: cover).

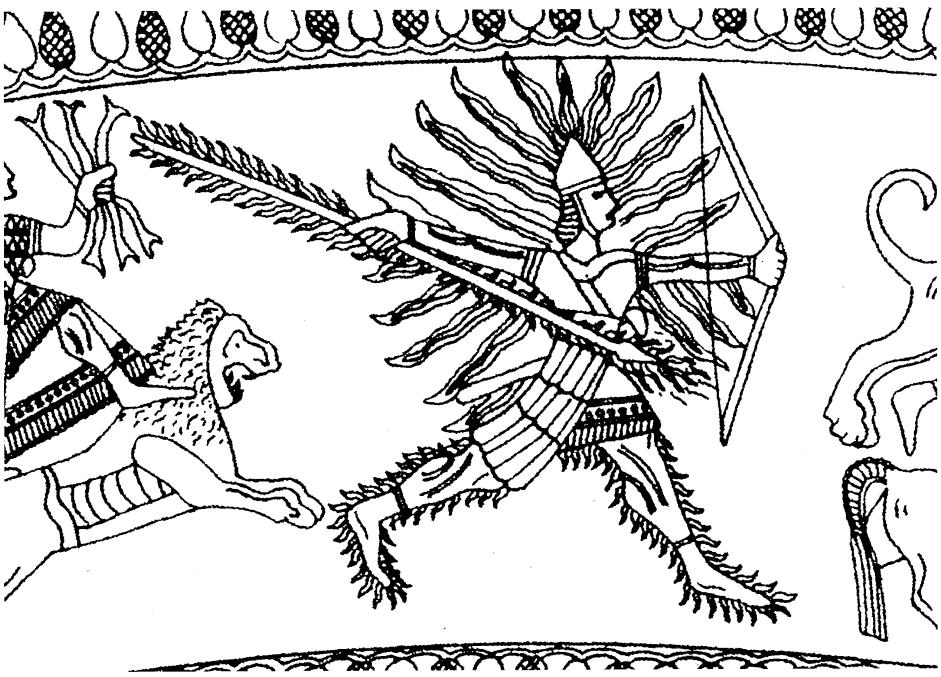


Fig. 24.20. Drawing of Haldi on the Anzaf shield (after Belli 1999a: fig. 17 foldout plan at the end of the book).

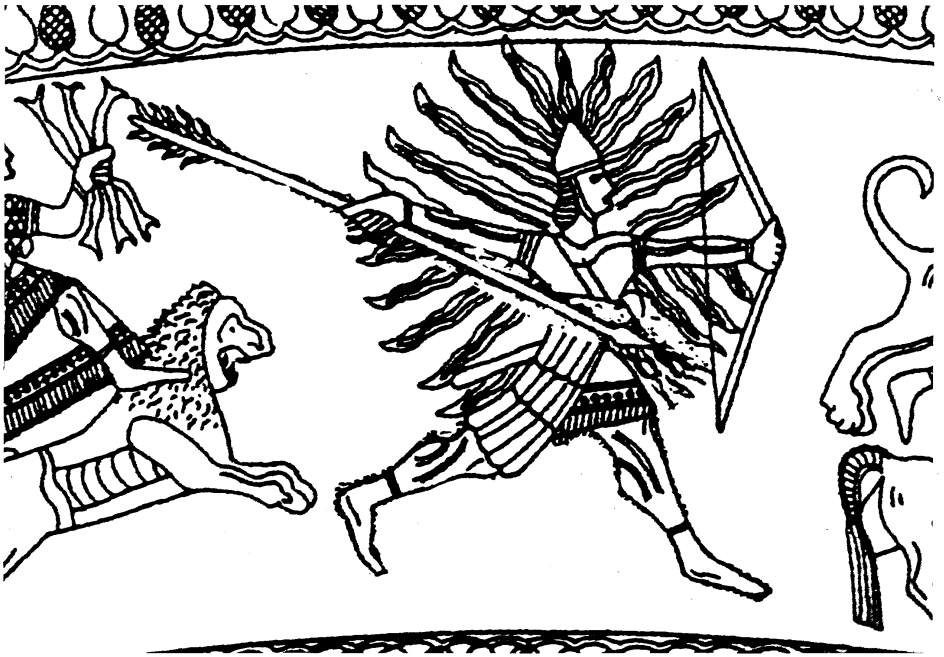


Fig. 24.21. Detail of Haldi on the Anzaf shield (after Seidl 2004: fig. 48).

as the parallel lines on the skirt of Haldi (Belli 1999a: pl. 51) are not revealed in the X-ray photographs and so it is possible that, although not visible on the X-rays and the other photographs, flames were incised along the length of the spear.

On one photograph published by Belli (1999: pl. 45) wavy lines are visible above and over the butt end of the spear held by Haldi. It is possible that these are indications of flames. No lines are visible on the apparently well preserved surface of the bronze beneath the spear shaft. The wavy lines above the shaft appear to be parallel and not arranged in tufts and run over the shaft of the spear (Fig. 24.22a). It is possible that they are the result of corrosion caused by the shield fragment being in contact with some other object.

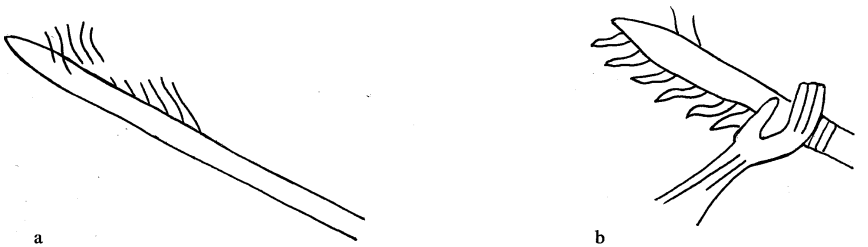


Fig. 24.22. Drawings of the butt ends of a. the spear of Haldi and b. the thrown spear on the Anzaf shield showing possible indications of flames (drawn by Cornelie Wolff after Belli 1999a: pls. 45 and 66).

The photographs of the spear in the battle scene show no flames on the spear except at the butt end behind the hand of a fallen enemy (Belli 1999a: pls. 64 and 66). No flames are visible on the X-ray photograph (Belli 1999a: pl. 50) and they cannot be seen along the shaft of the spear and next to the blade where

the surface appears to be free from corrosion (Belli 1999a: pls. 68-69). There are, however, five tongues of flame on the lower side of the butt end of the spear that can be clearly seen on pl. 66, although an eye of faith is needed to make out those on the upper side (Fig. 24.22b). These tongues of flame are depicted like the tufts of the lions' manes and not like the flights of an arrow. There is therefore some evidence that the weapon of Haldi had flames, but a more detailed examination of the shield after cleaning and conservation is needed before the extent of these flames can be established.

6. Conclusion

The TmP stamp from Horom is one of a series from several Urartian sites. These signs are found either on pottery vessels or on bronze bowls. Those on the pottery vessels were stamped into the clay before the vessel was fired while those on the bronze bowls were added some time after the more carefully completed cuneiform inscriptions and lion's head stamps.

It seems reasonable that the TmP indicated, as did other marks, that the object was part of the inventory of a particular institution. A similar system of such signs was in use in Assyria where for example the property of the king was marked with a lion and that of the queen with a scorpion. It is possible that the relatively common parasol marks could refer to the king's property.

The TmP appear only on ceramic vessels and bronze bowls. Such vessels might be used in almost every branch of the administration. If the TmP marks marked the property of a particular institution it would be difficult to determine which solely on the basis of the types of vessel on which they appear, although it has been suggested that the pottery vessels with handles would have been suitable for making libations. There is, however, no definite evidence that the TmP mark did not label the property of a Temple of Haldi. Since there were temples of Haldi in most major Urartian centres,[37] this might explain why the TmP have been found in several different sites.[38] Furthermore the probable association of a spear with Haldi would support such an explanation.

Spear-head shaped motifs, sometimes identified as trees, or leaves, or buds,[39] are a common feature in Urartian iconography appearing in a wide variety of contexts. They are particularly frequently found in connection with images which are identified as 'sacred trees'. It may form the whole of the object as on the stone pier bases from Kefkalesi (Fig. 24.23) or may appear as elements within the 'tree' as on the relief found in Adilcevaz (Fig. 24.24).[40] They are also held by the winged divine figures that are often found in association with the sacred tree (Fig. 13.02, and Figs. 24.23-24).

What exactly an Urartian would have recognised in these images – whether he would have seen plants, spears, flames, leaves, trees, towers, temples, or podiums – is difficult to establish: Perhaps all of the above, perhaps a selection of them, perhaps different Urartians would have seen different selections, but whatever specific interpretation it is still possible that this mark indicated that the object was the property of the temple of Haldi.

This is not to contradict the view that the sacred tree in its various guises might have represented or been closely associated with the chief god of the Urartian pantheon and his worship. This possibility is supported

[37] Only in Çavuştepe and Arinberd has more than one temple been found in an Urartian centre. It could be that the other deities were also worshipped within the Haldi Temples (as for example in the Temple of Assur in Ashur or of Marduk in Babylon) or that they had their own holy places which were not marked by the square *susi* temples.

[38] Paul Zimansky has drawn my attention to the fact that up till now TmP marks have not been found in Ayanis although it contains a temple dedicated to Haldi. There were probably also Temples of Haldi in Bastam, Çavuştepe, and Vankale, again sites where TmP marks have not been found. While this absence might be due to the accidents of preservation and of excavation, the future discovery of TmP at these sites would support their association with Haldi, until then the lack of TmP marks from these sites must raise the possibility that the marks were placed on vessels for a different reason.

[39] The fact that leaves come in all sorts of shapes while spearheads have a more restricted range inevitably means that this shape invokes a spear more readily than a leaf and indeed this particular shape of leaf is called lanceolate.

[40] For an alternative arrangement of these relief panels on the jambs of the doorway rather than on the façade see Salvini 2004a: figs. 10-11 on pp. 272-3, where he also (p. 262) publishes a drawing of an additional fragment of the lower edge of the garment and the back foot of the left hand figure.

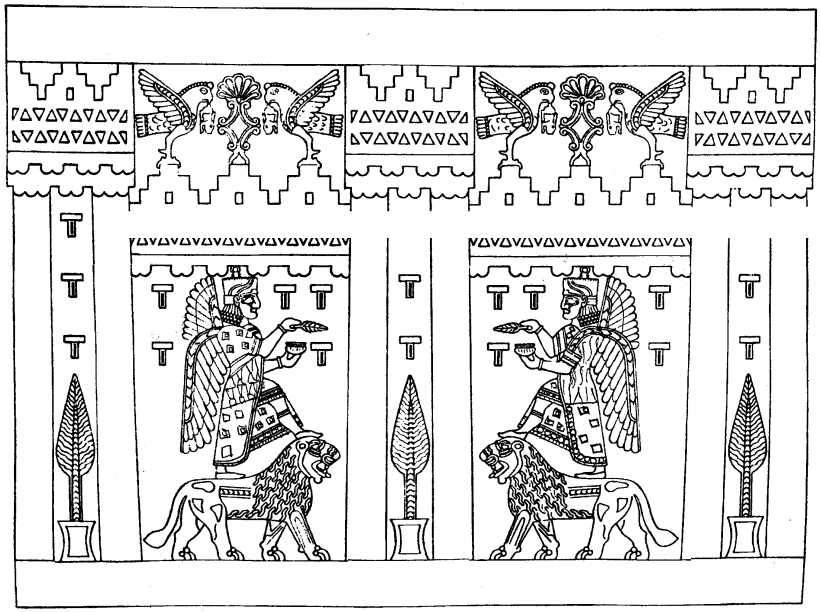


Fig. 24.23. Drawing of a stone pillar base from Kefkalesi (Adilcevaz) dating to the reign of Rusa son of Argishti (7th century BC) (after Calmeyer 1979: fig. 4).

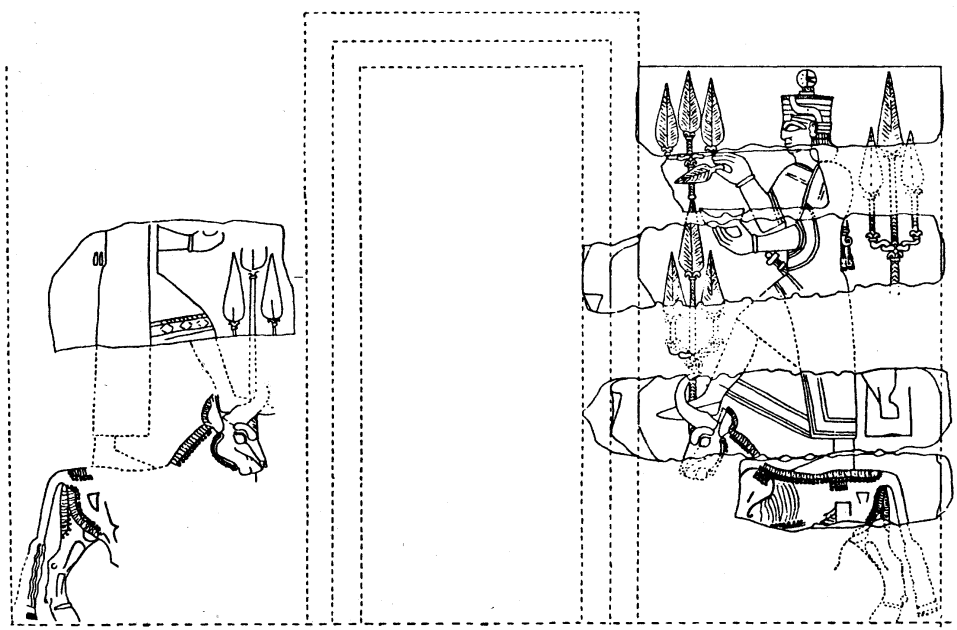


Fig. 24.24. Stone doorway from Adilcevaz (Kefkalesi) dating to the reign of Rusa son of Argishti (after Calmeyer 1979; fig. 6).

by the plausible connection of some sacred trees in Assyria with the god Assur as suggested by Simo Parpola (2000: 32-33) and by the analysis of the Black Stone of Lord Aberdeen, where the sacred tree is carved on Assur's podium and in turn represents the cuneiform sign AŠ used to write the name of the god as well as the third part of Esarhaddon's name (Roaf & Zgoll 2001: 274-277). The author of the most recent detailed study of the Assyrian 'sacred tree' proposes in her conclusion that one form of the tree 'may have denoted Assur; related types may have denoted other deities' and 'they were possibly considered as substitutes for gods' (Giovino 2007: 201). Another recent study (Seidl & Sallaberger 2005-2006) suggested identifying the 'sacred tree' with an object or symbol called an *urigallu* and cited a text in which *urigallu*s are identified with different gods and are imbued with divine powers (Seidl & Sallaberger 2005-2006: 69).[41] Although these authors did not discuss the form or meaning of the Urartian 'sacred tree', it is probable that, having been borrowed from Assyria, its basic function remained the same but was adapted to local Urartian norms, practices and beliefs: and therefore, if it had been associated with Assur the state god of the Assyrians, it would have been natural for its Urartian expression to have been associated with Haldi the state god of the Urartians.

Just as in Assyria the palmette on a stalk alternated with the sacred tree (Roaf & Zgoll 2001: 274-277), so in Urartu the Assyrian derived forms of the sacred tree were equivalent to the more exclusively Urartian trees with spear-blade shaped buds which culminated in the single stalked lanceolate form.

As so often in the iconography of the ancient Near East signs can have more than one association and more than one meaning. Thus lions may be lions or may represent the king, they may be associated with Ishtar and various other gods, and may represent enemies or evil beings according to the context in which they are found. Just as in the cuneiform script the same sign may be read in a number of ways and the same concept can be expressed in a number of ways so is it with images. One image can have several meanings while one concept can find its pictorial expression in a number of different images. Thus I find no difficulty in seeing the object on the 'tower' both as a plant and as a spear, sometimes with leaves and sometimes with flames. Its vegetal character is reminiscent of the sacred tree while its military form evokes the *šuri* of Haldi.

It should, however, be noted, that, although it is possible that the TmP marks were connected with the worship of the god Haldi, this is by no means certain and other explanations are possible.

[41] Although there is as yet no consensus about the precise significance or meaning of the 'sacred tree emblem' in Mesopotamia an increasing number of scholars consider that as well as having an apotropaic function it played a role in cult practices.

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Abbreviations

AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHw	W. von Soden 1965-1981. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden
AMI	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*
AMIT	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan*
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
CAD	A.L. Oppenheim & E. Reiner (eds.) 1956-. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago-Glückstadt
CTN 5	H.W.F. Saggs 2001. *The Nimrud Letters, 1952*, Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud V, British School of Archaeology in Iraq, London
CTU	M. Salvini 2008. *Corpus dei testi urartei* Vols. 1-3. *Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia*, Documenta Asiana 8, Rome
HchI	F.W. König 1955-1957. *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*, AfO Beiheft 8, Graz
IFŽ	*Istoriko-filologičeskij Žurnal [Historical-Philological Journal] Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, Yerevan
I.N.	*Ivories from Nimrud*
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
PNA	*The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAA 1	S. Parpola 1987. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West*, SAA 1, Helsinki
SAA 4	I. Starr 1990. *Queries to the Sun God: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, SAA 4, Helsinki
SAA 5	G.B. Lanfranchi & S. Parpola 1990. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II. Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces*, SAA 5, Helsinki
SAA 7	F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate 1992. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration*, SAA 7, Helsinki
SAA 11	F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate 1995. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*, SAA 11, Helsinki
SAA 15	A. Fuchs & S. Parpola 2001. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III. Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces*, SAA 15, Helsinki
SAA 16	M. Luukko & G. Van Buylaere 2002. *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*, SAA 16, Helsinki
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies

Sg 8 Sargon's Letter to the God Ashur. For the text see W. Mayer 1983. Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu – 714 v. Chr., Text und Übersetzung, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 115: 65-132

SMEA *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*

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UPD I.M. D'jakonov, 1963. *Urartskie pis'ma i dokumenty* [*Urartian letters and documents*], Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moskva - Leningrad

VDI *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii [Messenger of Ancient History]*

ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*

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